

## Children and family talk for 24<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Good morning, and welcome to the children and family worship from Christ Church URC, Rayleigh. Let's start our worship by reading from Psalm 62 verses 5 to 8.

*"Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in God. God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken. My victory and honour come from God alone. God is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me. O my people, trust in God at all times. Pour out your heart to God, for God is our refuge."*

Our Bible story today is from the book of Jonah which you can find in the old testament.

Jonah got a message from God to go to the great city of Nineveh and to tell the people there that God was very unhappy with how they had been behaving. But Jonah didn't want to go and he went off in the opposite direction thinking he could get away from the Lord. He went to Joppa and got on a ship which was about to sail to Tarshish.

Then God sent a powerful wind which created a violent storm, threatening to break the ship apart. The sailors were afraid and shouted to their gods for help, whilst throwing cargo overboard to make the ship lighter.

But Jonah was asleep during the storm, so the captain went to find him asking him, "How can you sleep at a time like this? – Get up and pray to your god, maybe he will pay attention and spare our lives!"

Then the crew tried to work out who had upset the gods to cause such a terrible storm, and they identified Jonah. They asked him questions to find out why, and Jonah told them "I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."

The sailors were terrified when they heard he was running away from God and asked what they could do to stop the storm, so Jonah told them to throw him into the sea and it would calm down. "I know that this terrible storm is all my fault", he said.

But the sailors rowed harder to try to get the ship to land. The storm was too bad and they realised they couldn't make it. They cried out to the Lord, Jonah's God, "Oh Lord, don't let us die for this man's wrong. Don't hold us responsible, you have sent this storm for your own good reasons". Then they picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea! Straight away the storm stopped! The sailors were amazed by God's great power, and started to worship him.

Jonah however, sank into the sea, where God had arranged a very large fish to come and pick him up. Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights. Inside the fish Jonah talked to God and admitted what he had done wrong. He acknowledged that God had saved him from drowning and remembered his promises to serve God, saying he would serve God once again.

Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach. God spoke to Jonah again, telling him to go to Nineveh and deliver his message, and this time Jonah went. He gave the people the message from God, and told them that in forty days their great city would be destroyed because they had been so bad. The King of Nineveh believed the message and immediately declared that all the people should show how sorry they were by putting on rough cloth and not eating. The king told the people to pray to God, change their behaviour to good and stop their violence.

God saw all that they did and decided not to carry out the destruction of the city. This made Jonah angry and he complained to God. He even went off and sulked. But God explained to Jonah how the people of Nineveh were getting another chance as there were more than 120,000 people living there who God felt sorry for, and they had been living without knowing about God's goodness.

Let's praise God now as we sing:

### **I, the Lord of Sea and Sky**

I, The Lord of Sea and Sky,  
I Have Heard My People Cry.  
All Who Dwell in Dark and Sin,  
My Hand Will Save.  
I Who Made the Stars of Night,  
I Will Make Their Darkness Bright.  
Who Will Bear My Light to Them?  
Whom Shall I Send?

Here I Am Lord, Is It I, Lord?  
I Have Heard You Calling in The Night.  
I Will Go Lord, If You Lead Me.  
I Will Hold Your People in My Heart.

I, The Lord of Snow and Rain,  
I Have Borne My People's Pain.  
I Have Wept for Love of Them, They Turn Away.  
I Will Break Their Hearts of Stone,  
Give Them Hearts for Love Alone.  
I Will Speak My Word to Them  
Whom Shall I Send?

Here I Am Lord, Is It I, Lord?  
I Have Heard You Calling in The Night.  
I Will Go Lord, If You Lead Me.  
I Will Hold Your People in My Heart.

I, The Lord of Wind and Flame  
I Will Tend the Poor and Lame.  
I Will Set A Feast for Them,  
My Hand Will Save  
Finest Bread I Will Provide,  
Till Their Hearts Be Satisfied.  
I Will Give My Life to Them,  
Whom Shall I Send?

Here I Am Lord, Is It I, Lord?  
I Have Heard You Calling in The Night.  
I Will Go Lord, If You Lead Me.  
I Will Hold Your People in My Heart.

### **Let's talk about our Bible story:**

*Jonah was a prophet in the old testament. He wrote the book of Jonah around 2,800 years ago. The city of Nineveh was the largest city in the world at the time, and took 3 days to walk across. It was also a very important city but the people were behaving very badly, and God needed someone to tell them, God chose Jonah for this important job.*

*But Jonah didn't want this job. He had heard about all the bad things that were going on there and it was the last place he wanted to be. Sometimes God may ask us to do things that we don't want to or maybe we are worried about. The important thing to remember is that God has a plan for each of us, and will always look after us, just as he looked after Jonah, even when Jonah was going the wrong way. Jonah realised that it is better to do what God wants us to do straight away, by running away, Jonah had endangered not only his own life but those of the sailors too. Jonah also realised that no matter where he was, he could not hide from God. As a prophet, Jonah had made promises to God, and by running away from God, Jonah was not keeping those promises. Once Jonah admitted his mistake and returned to God, God gave him another chance.*

*However, later, when God gave the Ninevites a second chance, Jonah becomes angry and can't accept God's decision. He sulks. Jonah knew what he had done was wrong, did the people of Nineveh know how wrong they were? One version of the bible says that they couldn't tell their right hand from their left. In other words, they couldn't tell good from bad. Once Jonah had told them of their wrong, they immediately set to putting things right, unlike Jonah who deliberately ran in the opposite direction. The People of Nineveh were not thought of as God's people, but God wants everyone to have the chance to know him, not just a select few.*

*Our God is a loving God, who loves us protects us and forgives us when we say sorry.*

Let's talk to God again now:

Thankyou God for loving us, even when we do things wrong, or try to run in the wrong direction. Thankyou for looking after us and always being there. Amen.

Let's all do the Grace together, follow me for the actions

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hold out hands as if expecting a present)

And the love of God (Put your hands on your heart)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hold hands)

Be with us all now and for ever. Amen! (raise hands together on the Amen)

The children's sheet from Roots:

<https://www.rootsontheweb.com/media/21760/24th-january-2021-activity-sheet.pdf>